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ROMANS 9

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

UBS[4]	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
God's Election	Israel's Rejection of Christ	The Problem of Israel's Unbelief	God and His People	The Privileges of Israel
9:1-5	9:1-5	9:1-5	9:1-5	9:1-5
	Israel's Rejection and God's Purpose	God's Promise to Israel Has Not Failed		God Has Kept His Promise
9:6-13	9:6-13	9:6-13	9:6-9	9:6-13 (7b)
			9:10-13	
(13)	Israel's Rejection and God's Justice	God's Right to Choose (13)		God is Not Unjust
9:14-18 (15)	9:14-29	9:14-18 (15)	9:14-18	9:14-18
God's Wrath and Mercy			God's Anger and Mercy	
9:19-29		9:19-26	9:19-21	9:19-21
			9:22-29	9:22-24
				All Has Been Foretold in OT
(25b-26)	(25b-28)	(25b-26)	(25b-26)	9:25-29
(29b)	(29b)	9:27-29 (29b)		
Israel and the Gospel	Present Condition of Israel	True Righteousness is by Faith	Israel and the Gospel	
9:30-10:4 (33)	9:30-33 (33)	9:30-10:4 (33)	9:30-10:4 (33)	9:30-33

READING CYCLE THREE (see "Bible Interpretation Seminar")
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3). Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

ROMANS 9-11'S RELATIONSHIP TO ROMANS 1-8

A. There have been two ways of understanding this literary unit's relationship to Romans 1-8.
   1. It is a totally separate topic, a theological parenthesis
      a. There is a drastic contrast and lack of logical connection between Rom. 8:39 and 9:1.
      b. It is directly related to the historical tension in the church at Rome between believing Jews and believing Gentiles. It was possibly related to the growing Gentile leadership of the Church because many Jewish people had left Rome after Caesar's decree to stop Jewish rituals.
      c. There was misunderstanding about Paul's preaching concerning Israel (and the Law) and his apostleship to the Gentiles (offer of free grace), therefore, he deals with this topic in this section. Paul wanted this church to help him on a mission to Spain.
   2. It is the climax and logical conclusion of Paul's presentation of the gospel.
      a. Paul concludes Romans 8 with the promise of "no separation from the love of God." What about the unbelief of the covenant people (possibly related to the conflict within the Roman church between believing Jewish and Gentile leadership)?
      b. Romans 9-11 answers the paradox of the gospel concerning Israel's unbelief!
      c. Paul has been addressing this very issue (i.e., the preeminence of Israel) all through the letter (cf. Rom. 1:3,16; 2-3; 4).
      d. Paul claims that God is true to His Word. What about His OT word to Israel? Are all those promises null and void? See note at Rom. 9:6.
      SPECIAL TOPIC: PAUL'S VIEWS OF THE MOSAIC LAW
      SPECIAL TOPIC: MOSAIC LAW AND THE CHRISTIAN

B. There are several possible ways to outline this literary unit
   1. by Paul's use of a supposed objector (diatribe). Paul knew how Jewish people would respond to his gospel presentation, so he puts their objections in rhetorical questions.
      a. Rom. 9:6
      b. Rom. 9:14
      c. Rom. 9:19
      d. Rom. 9:30
      e. Rom. 11:1
      f. Rom. 11:11
   2. Romans 9-11 forms a literary unit (chapter and verse divisions are not inspired and were added in the Middle Ages). It must be interpreted together as a whole. However, there are at least three major subject divisions.
      a. Rom. 9:1-29 (focusing on God's sovereignty)
      b. Rom. 9:30-10:21 (focusing on human responsibility)
      c. Rom. 11:1-32 (God's inclusive, eternal, redemptive purpose)

C. This section is as much a cry from the heart (cf. Rom. 9:3; 11:22,33) as a presentation from the mind (logical outline). Its passion reminds one of God's heart breaking over rebellious Israel as in Hosea 11:1-4,8-9.

In many ways the pain and goodness of the Law in Romans 7 are paralleled in Romans 9-10. In both cases Paul's heart was breaking over the irony of a law from God that brought death instead of life!

D. Paul's use of over 25 OT quotes in Romans 9-11 shows his desire to illustrate the paradox of Israel from OT sources, as he did in Romans 4, not just current experience. The majority of Abraham's physical descendants had rejected God, even in the past (cf. Acts 7; Nehemiah 9).

E. This text, like Eph. 1:3-14, deals with the eternal purposes of God for the redemption of all humanity. At first it seems to describe God choosing some individuals and rejecting other individuals (supralapsarian Calvinism), however, I think the focus is not on individuals, but on God's eternal plan of redemption (cf. Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; and 13:29). The individuals in chapters 9 and 11 represent people groups, not individuals.

The Jerome Biblical Commentary, vol. 2, "The New Testament," edited by Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Raymond E. Brown, says:

> "It is important to realize from the outset that Paul's perspective is corporate; he is not discussing the responsibility of individuals. If he seems to bring up the question of divine predestination, this has nothing to do with the predestination of individuals to glory" (p. 318).

SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S ETERNAL REDEMPTIVE PLAN

F. A helpful YouTube video entitled, "How and Why Romans 9-11 Makes Me Arminian," by Dr. Matt. O'Reilly, is a very helpful overview of this literary unit. It contrasts corporate election with individual election.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS TO CHAPTER 9

A. What a drastic change of attitude occurs between Romans 8 and Romans 9.

B. Romans 9 is one of the strongest NT passages on God's sovereignty (i.e., the others being, Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-14), while Romans 10 states human's freewill clearly and repeatedly

1. "everyone," Rom. 9:4
2. "whosoever," Rom. 9:11,13
3. "all" Rom. 9:12 (twice)

Paul never tries to reconcile this theological tension. They are both true! Most Bible doctrines are presented in paradoxical or dialectical pairs. Most systems of theology are logical, but proof-text only one aspect of biblical truth. Both Augustinianism and Calvinism versus semi-Pelagianism and Arminianism have elements of truth and error. Biblical tension between doctrines is preferable to a proof-texted, dogmatic, rational, theological system that forces the Bible onto a preconceived interpretive grid!

SPECIAL TOPIC: EASTERN LITERATURE

C. Romans 9:30-33 is a summary of Romans 9 and the theme of Romans 10.

D. Notice how much Paul uses OT texts to establish his argument. This presupposes a Jewish readership in Rome.

1. Rom. 9:7 – Gen. 21:12
2. Rom. 9:9 – Gen. 18:10,14
3. Rom. 9:12 – Gen. 25:32
4. Rom. 9:13 – Mal. 1:2-3

5. Rom. 9:15 – Exod. 33:19
6. Rom. 9:17 – Exod. 9:16
7. Rom. 9:25 – Hosea 2:23
8. Rom. 9:26 – Hosea 1:10
9. Rom. 9:27 – Isa. 10:22
10. Rom. 9:28 – Isa. 10:23
11. Rom. 9:29 – Isa. 1:9
12. Rom. 9:33 – Isa. 28:16 and 8:14

There are many more OT quotes in Romans 10 and 11!

E. Paul uses rabbinical hermeneutics to make his theological points. Please see full note at Rom. 9:33 and
SPECIAL TOPIC: RABBINICAL HERMENTUTICAL TECHNIQUES

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 9:1-5

[1]I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,[2]that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. [3]For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, [4]who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, [5]whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

9:1-2 Verses 1 and 2 form one sentence in Greek. Paul is giving several reasons they (the church at Rome) could know that he was telling the truth.

1. his union with Christ, Rom. 9:1
2. his Spirit-led conscience, Rom. 9:1
3. his deep feelings for Israel, Rom. 9:2

9:1 "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying" Paul often made this kind of statement of his veracity (cf. 2 Cor. 11:10; Gal. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:7) or a similar one about God as his witness (cf. Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; 11:31; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:5,10). It was his way of asserting the truthfulness of his teachings and preaching. The experience on the road to Damascus changed everything (cf. Acts 9)!

▣ **"the truth"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: "TRUTH" IN PAUL'S WRITINGS

▣ **"my conscience"** This referred to the believer's God-given, Spirit-led moral sense. In one sense this is a key source of authority for believers. It is God's word, understood and applied by the Spirit of God to our minds (cf. 1 Tim. 1:5,19). The problem arises when believers—and for that matter, unbelievers—continue to reject the Word and the Spirit; it then becomes easier to rationalize one's sin (cf. 1 Tim. 4:2). Our consciences can be culturally and experientially conditioned.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CONSCIENCE

▣

NASB, NKJV, Peshitta	**"bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit"**
NRSV	**"confirms it by the Holy Spirit"**

TEV	**"ruled by the Holy Spirit"**
NJB	**"in union with the Holy Spirit assumes me"**
REB	**"enlightened by the Holy Spirit"**

Paul believed he had a special call and mandate from Christ (cf. Acts 9:1-22; Gal. 1:1).

The VERBAL (PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, cf. Rom. 2:15) is a compound with *sun* (so common in Paul). He was convinced of his new understanding based on

1. the revelation of Christ
   a. on the road to Damascus
   b. taught to him by Christ in Arabia (Nabetean kingdom)
2. the internal witness of the Spirit

He was an Apostle and spoke with divine authority (cf. 1 Cor. 7:25,40). He shared God's grief over the unbelief and incalcitrance of national Israel (cf. Rom. 9:2). They had so many chances and advantages (cf. Rom. 9:4-5).

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE PERSONHOOD OF THE SPIRIT

9:3

NASB, NKJV, NRSV	**"For I could wish. . ."**
TEV	**"For their sake I could wish"**
NJB	**"I would be willing. . ."**
REB	**"I would even pray to"**
Peshitta	**"For I have prayed that. . ."**

Paul felt so deeply for his people, Israel, that if his separation could effect their inclusion, he would be willing, Rom. 9:3. This verse has such a strong, emphatic grammatical construction (IMPERFECT MIDDLE INDICATIVE with both *autos* and *egō*, and a PRESENT INFINITIVE). The intensity and burden of this prayer is very similar to Moses' intercessory prayer for sinful Israel in Exod. 32:30-35. This is best understood as a statement of desire, not fact. It is similar to a use of the IMPERFECT TENSE in Gal. 4:20.

SPECIAL TOPIC: INTERCESSORY PRAYER

▣

NASB	**"were accursed, *separated* from Christ"**
NKJV	**"were accursed from Christ"**
NRSV	**"were accursed and cut off from Christ"**
TEV	**"were under God's curse and separated from Christ"**
NJB	**"willingly be condemned and cut off from Christ"**
REB	**"to be an outcast myself, cut off from Christ"**
Peshitta	**"might be accursed because of Christ"**

The basic etymology of "holy" is to set apart to God for His use. This same concept relates to "curse" (*anathema*, cf. 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22; Gal. 1:8,9). Something or someone is set apart to God. It can be a positive experience (cf. Lev. 27:28; Luke 21:5) or a negative experience (cf. Josh. 6-7; Rom. 9:3), depending on the context.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CURSE *(ANATHEMA)*

▣ **"my kinsmen according to the flesh"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: FLESH (*SARX*)

9:4-5 This series of NOUN PHRASES spells out in graphic detail the privileges of Israel. Their unbelief was all the more culpable in light of these advantages. To whom much is given, much is required (cf. Luke 12:48)!

9:4 "Israelites" This was the OT covenant name for Abraham's seed. After a pivotal encounter with God Jacob's name was changed to Israel (cf. Gen. 32:28). It became the collective title for the Jewish nation. Its etymology may be "may *El* (God) persevere" and by implication, not Jacob's trickery.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ISRAEL (THE NAME)

▣ **"to whom belongs the adoption as sons"** In the OT the PLURAL of "sons" usually referred to the angels (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Dan. 3:25; Ps. 29:1; 89:6-7; see SPECIAL TOPIC: "SONS OF GOD" IN GENESIS 6), while the SINGULAR referred to

1. the Israeli King (cf. 2 Sam. 7:14; SPECIAL TOPIC: SON OF GOD)
2. the nation (cf. Exod. 4:22,23; Deut. 14:1; Hosea 11:1)
3. the Messiah (cf. Ps. 2:7; SPECIAL TOPIC: MESSIAH)
4. it can refer to humans (cf. Deut. 32:5; Ps. 73:15; Ezek. 2:1; Hos. 1:10. Genesis 6:2 is ambiguous; it could be either). In the NT it refers to one who belongs to the family of God.

Paul's major imagery for salvation was "adoption" (cf. Rom. 8:15,23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), while Peter and John's was "born again." They are both familial images. It is not a Jewish, but Roman, imagery. Adoption was a very expensive and time consuming legal procedure under Roman law. Once adopted the person was considered a new person who could not be legally disowned or killed by their adoptive father.

However, in this verse it refers to Israel.

▣ **"the glory"** The Hebrew root meant "to be heavy" which was imagery for that which was valuable. Here it refers to

1. God's revealing Himself on Mt. Sinai (cf. Exod. 19:18-19)
2. the *Shekinah* cloud of glory which led the Israelites during the Wilderness Wandering Period (cf. Exod. 40:34-38); see SPECIAL TOPIC: *SHEKINAH*

YHWH uniquely revealed Himself to Israel. YHWH's presence was referred to as His glory (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:10-11; Ezek. 1:28).

SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY (NT)

SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY (OT)

▣ **"the covenants"** In the ancient Greek manuscripts P^{46}, B, F, and G the SINGULAR "covenant" is used. However, the PLURAL is in MSS א, C, and some Old Latin, Vulgate, and Coptic versions. The UBS^4 gives the PLURAL a "B" rating (almost certain). However, the PLURAL is never used in the OT. There are several specific covenants in the OT: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. Since the giving of the Law is mentioned next, this probably refers to the Abrahamic Covenant, which was the one Paul saw as foundational (cf. Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:16-17) and was repeated several times (i.e., Genesis 12, 15, 17) and to each of the Patriarchs.

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

▣ **"the giving of the Law and the temple service"** This would refer to

1. Moses' receiving the Law on Mt. Sinai (cf. Exodus 19-20)
2. the Tabernacle of the Wilderness Wandering Period (cf. Exodus 25-40 and Leviticus); see SPECIAL TOPIC: TABERNACLE OF THE WILDERNESS (chart)

▣ **"the promises"** God has revealed His future plans (cf. Rom. 1:2; Acts 13:32; Titus 1:2; Heb. 1:1) through the OT.

Since "the covenants" are mentioned earlier, "the promises" probably refers to the coming Messiah (cf. Rom. 9:5, e.g., Gen. 3:15; 49:10; Deut. 18:15,18-19; 2 Sam. 7; Ps. 16:10; 118:22; Isa.

7:14; 9:6; 11:1-5; Dan. 7:13,27; Micah 5:2-5a; Zech. 2:6-13; 6:12-13; 9:9; 11:12).

These promises (covenants) are both unconditional and conditional. They were unconditional as far as God's performance (cf. Gen. 15:12-21), but conditional on mankind's faith and obedience (cf. Gen. 15:6 and Romans 4). Only Israel had God's self revelation before the coming of Christ (but with exceptions such as Melchizedek, Job, Jethro).

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

9:5 "the fathers" This referred to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Patriarchs of Genesis 12-50 (cf. Rom. 11:28; Deut. 7:8; 10:15).

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHS

▣ **"from whom is the Christ according to the flesh"** This referred to the physical lineage of the Messiah (cf. Rom. 1:3), the Anointed One, God's special chosen servant who would accomplish God's promises and plans, (cf. Rom. 10:6). This was the purpose of OT election!

The term "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Anointed One." In the OT three groups of leaders were anointed with special holy oil.

1. kings of Israel
2. high priests of Israel
3. prophets of Israel

It was a symbol of God's choosing and equipping them for His service. Jesus fulfilled all three of these anointed offices (cf. Heb. 1:2-3). He is God's full revelation because He was God incarnate (cf. Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2-5a; John 1:1-14; Col. 1:13-20).

SPECIAL TOPIC: MESSIAH

SPECIAL TOPIC: ANOINTING IN THE BIBLE

▣

NASB	**"the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever"**
NKJV	**"Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God"**
NRSV	**"comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever"**
TEV	**"and Christ as a human being, belongs to their race. May God, who rules over all, be praised forever"**
NJB	**"came Christ who is above all, God for ever blessed"**
REB	**"May God, supreme above all, be blessed forever"**
Peshitta	**"who is God over all, to whom are due praise and thanksgiving for ever and ever**

Grammatically this could be a doxology to the Father (TEV, following Jewish tradition), but the context favors Paul's affirmation of Jesus' deity (it does not follow the pattern of Jewish doxologies to YHWH in the LXX). Paul does not use *Theos* for Jesus often, but he does use it (cf. Acts 20:28; 2 Thess. 1:12; Titus 2:13; Phil. 2:6). All the early church Fathers interpreted this text as referring to Jesus. Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary On the Greek New Testament*, pp. 520-522, shows that the different options are related to where the punctuation marks are placed. The ancient uncial manuscripts had no

1. capitalization
2. punctuation marks
3. paragraph divisions
4. not even spaces between words

▣ **"who is over all"** This also could be a descriptive phrase for God the Father or Jesus the Son. It does reflect Jesus' statement of Matt. 28:19 and Paul's in Col. 1:15-20. This majestic phrase showed the height of Israel's folly in rejecting Jesus of Nazareth.

▣ **"forever"** This is literally the Greek idiomatic phrase "unto the ages" (cf. Luke 1:33; Rom. 1:25; 11:36; Gal. 1:5; 1 Tim. 1:17). This is one of several related phrases

1. "unto the age" (cf. Matt. 21:19 [Mark 11:14]; Luke 1:55; John 6:5,58; 8:35; 12:34; 13:8; 14:16; 2 Cor. 9:9)
2. "of the age of the ages" (cf. Eph. 3:21)

There seems to be no distinction between these idioms for "forever." The term "ages" may be PLURAL in a figurative sense of the rabbinical grammatical construction called THE PLURAL OF MAJESTY or it may refer to the concept of several "ages" in the Jewish sense of "age of innocence," "age of wickedness," "age to come," or "age of righteousness."

SPECIAL TOPIC: FOREVER (GREEK IDIOM)

SPECIAL TOPIC: THIS AGE AND THE AGE TO COME

▣ **"Amen"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: AMEN

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 9:6-13

[6]But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; [7]nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." [8]That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. [9]For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." [10]And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; [11]for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, [12]it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." [13]Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

9:6 "the word of God" In this context this phrase refers to the OT covenantal promises. God's promises are sure (cf. Num. 23:19; Joshua 21:45; 23:14; 2 Kgs. 10:10; Isa. 40:8; 55:11; 59:21). Again, the theological distinction between "conditional" and "unconditional" covenant promises is very helpful.

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

▣

NASB, NRSV, TEV, REB	**"has failed"**
NKJV	**"has taken no effect"**
REB	**"has proven false"**
Peshitta	**"has actually failed"**

This is the cricial question! The term (*ekpiptō*) was used in the Septuagint several times for something (cf. Isa. 6:13) or someone (cf. Isa. 14:12) falling. Here it is a PERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE, which denotes a state of being with lasting results (but it is negated). See note above

for the surety of God's word. The problem is not God or His promises, but human sin and rebellion.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE BIBLE (ITS UNIQUENESS AND INSPIRATION)

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE FALL OF MANKIND

▣

NASB	**"For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel"**
NKJV	**"For they are not all Israel who are of Israel"**
NRSV	**"For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel"**
TEV	**"For not all the people of Israel are the people of God"**
NJB	**"Not all those who descend from Israel are Israel"**
REB	**"Not all the offspring of Israel are truly Israel"**
Peshitta	**"For all those who belong to Israel are not Israelites"**

The meaning of this paradoxical statement revolves around the different biblical meanings of the term "Israel."

1. Israel, meaning Jacob's descendants (cf. Gen. 32:22-32)
2. Israel, meaning the elect people of God (cf. TEV; in context, this is the best option)
3. spiritual Israel, Israel meaning the church, (cf. Gal. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:8,9; Rev. 1:6) versus natural Israel (cf. Rom. 9:3-6)

Only some of Abraham's children were the children of promise (cf. Rom. 9:7). All the children of Isaac were never right with God based solely on their lineage (cf. Rom. 9:7), but on their faith (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 4:1ff.; John 8:31-59; Gal. 3:7-9; 4:23). It was the believing remnant who received God's promises and walked in them by faith (cf. Rom. 9:27; 11:5).

Verse 6 starts a series of supposed objections (cf. Rom. 9:14,19,30; 11:1). This continues Paul's diatribe format. It conveys truth by means of a supposed objector (i.e., Mal. 1:2,6,7 [twice],12,13; 2:14,17 [twice]; 3:7,13,14).

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE REMNANT, THREE SENSES

9:7 The second half of this verse is a quote from Gen. 21:12d. Not all of Abraham's children were children of God's covenant promise (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-11; 17:1-21; 18:1-15; Gal. 4:23). This shows the distinction between Ishmael and Isaac in Rom. 9:8-9, and Jacob and Esau in Rom. 9:10-11. These individuals represent peoples (i.e., corporate election for a redemptive purpose).

9:8 Here Paul is using the term "flesh" to refer to national descent (cf. Rom. 1:3; 4:1; 9:3,5). He is contrasting the natural children of Abraham (the Jews of Rom. 9:3) with the other children of Abraham (v. 7).

This is not the same contrast as Rom. 8:4-11, fallen mankind versus redeemed mankind.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FLESH

▣ **"the children of God"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: THE CHILDREN OF GOD

9:9 This is a quote from Genesis 18:10,14; see notes online. The promised child ("the seed") will come from Sarah at God's initiative. This eventually will culminate in the birth of the Messiah. Isaac was a special fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3 thirteen years earlier.

9:10 The wives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were barren; they could not conceive. Their inability to have a child was one of God's ways to show that He was in control of the covenant promises, the Messianic line.

The other way was that the true Messianic line never proceeds through the oldest son of the Patriarchs (which was culturally expected). The key is God's choice (cf. Rom. 9:11-12).

9:11-12 Verses 11-12 are one sentence in Greek. This account is taken from Gen. 25:19-34; see notes online. This example is used to prove that God's choice (cf. Rom. 9:16), not

1. human lineage
2. human merit or achievements (cf. Rom. 9:16)

This is the new mechanism of the gospel, the new covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-36). However, it must be remembered that God's choice was not meant to exclude, but to include! The Messiah will come from a select seed, but He will come for all (who exercise faith, cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 4:3,22-25; Romans 10).

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHY DO OT COVENANT PROMISES SEEM SO DIFFERENT FROM NT COVENANT PROMISES?

9:11 "purpose" This is the compound term *pro* plus *tithēmi*, which has several senses.

1. in Rom. 3:25
    a. set forth publicly
    b. propitiatory gift
2. to plan beforehand
    a. of Paul, Rom. 1:13
    b. of God, Eph. 1:9

The NOUN form (*prothesis*), used in this text, means "to set before"

1. used of the shewbread in the temple, Matt. 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4
2. used of a predetermined, redemptive purpose of God, Rom. 8:28; 9:11; Eph. 1:5,11; 3:10; 2 Tim. 1:9; 3:10

Paul uses several compound terms with the PREPOSITION *pro* (before) in Romans 8 and 9 of Romans and Ephesians 1 (they show God's planned activity).

1. *proginōskō* (foreknew), Rom. 8:29
2. *proorizō* (design beforehand), Rom. 8:29 (Eph. 1:5,11), 30 (Eph. 1:9)
3. *prothesis* (predetermined purpose), Rom. 9:11
4. *proetoimazō* (preface beforehand), Rom. 9:23
5. *prolegō* (previously said), Rom. 9:29
6. *proelpizō* (hoped beforehand), Eph. 1:12)

9:12 This is a quote from the prophecy of Gen. 25:23 related to Esau and Jacob (as representations of a people group). This shows that Rebekah and Jacob acted out of prophecy, not personal gain, in tricking Isaac in regard to the blessing!

9:13 "but Esau I hated" This is a quote from Mal. 1:2-3. "Hate" is a Hebrew idiom of comparison. It sounds harsh in English, but compare Gen. 29:31-33; Deut. 21:15; Matt. 10:37-38; Luke 14:26; and John 12:25. The anthropomorphic terms "love" and "hate" relate not to God's emotions towards these individuals, but His commitment to a Messianic line and promise. Jacob was the son of promise based on the prophecy of Gen. 25:23. Esau, in Mal. 1:2-3, referred to the nation of Edom (the descendant of Esau).

SPECIAL TOPIC: GOD DESCRIBED AS HUMAN (ANTHROPOMORPHISM)

SPECIAL TOPIC: EDOM AND ISRAEL

SPECIAL TOPIC: SATANIC ATTEMPTS TO THWART THE MESSIANIC LINE IN GENESIS

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 9:14-18

[14]What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

15For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." 16So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

9:14 "What shall we say then" Paul often used this diatribe form (cf. Rom. 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14,19,30).

▣ **"There is no injustice with God, is there?"** The grammar expects a "no" answer. How can God hold humans responsible if God's sovereignty is the deciding factor (cf. Rom. 9:19)? This is the mystery of election. The key emphasis in this context is that God is free to do what He will with humanity (rebellious mankind), however, God's sovereignty is expressed in mercy (see note at Rom. 9:15), not raw power. Again, it must be stated that this context is discussing corporate election for the purpose of universal redemption!

It must also be stated that God's sovereign choices are not based on foreknowledge of human's future choices and actions. If this were true then ultimately individual's choices and actions and merits would be the basis of God's choices (cf. Rom. 9:16; 1 Pet. 1:2). Behind this is the traditional Jewish view of prosperity to the righteous (cf. Deuteronomy 27-28; Job and Psalm 73). But, God chooses to bless the unworthy through faith (not performance, cf. Rom. 5:8). God knows all things but He has chosen to limit His choices

1. in mercy
2. in promise

There is a necessary human response, but it follows and ultimately confirms God's life changing elective choice!

▣ **"May it never be"** This is a rare OPTATIVE FORM that was often used by Paul for an emphatic negation usually to his diatribe objector's questions (cf. Rom. 3:4,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 11:1,11 also 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14). It is possibly a Hebrew idiom.

9:15 This is a quote from Exod. 33:19 (see notes online). God is free to act according to His own redemptive purposes. Even Moses did not merit God's blessing (cf. Exod. 33:20). He was a murdered (cf. Exod. 2:11-15). The theological key is that His choices are always in mercy (cf. Rom. 9:16, 18-23; 11:30,31,32).

SPECIAL TOPIC: CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL'S GOD (OT)

9:15-16 "mercy" This Greek word (*eleos*, cf. Rom. 9:15,16,18,23; 11:30,31,32) is used in the Septuagint (LXX) to translate the Hebrew term *hesed* (remember the writers of the NT were Hebrew thinkers writing in street Greek), which meant "steadfast, covenant loyalty." God's mercy and election are plural, corporate, (Jews [Isaac], not Arabs [Ishmael]; Israel [Jacob], not Edom [Esau], but believing Jews and believing Gentiles, cf. Rom. 9:24) as well as individuals. This truth is one of the keys to unlocking the mystery of the doctrine of predestination.

The other key in the context of Romans 9-11 is God's unchanging character—mercy (cf. Rom. 9:15,16,18,23; 11:30,31,32), and not human performance. Mercy will eventually reach all who believe in Christ. Mercy opens the door of faith to all (cf. Rom. 5:18-19).

SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S ETERNAL REDEMPTIVE PLAN

SPECIAL TOPIC: LOVINGKINDNESS (*HESED*)

SPECIAL TOPIC: PREDESTINATION

9:17-18 Verse 17 is a powerful quote from Exod. 9:16; verse 18 is the conclusion drawn from the quote. Pharaoh is said to have hardened his own heart in Exod. 8:15,19,32; 9:34. God is said to have hardened his heart in Exod. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:20,27; 11:10. This example is used to show God's sovereignty (cf. Rom. 9:18). Pharaoh is responsible for his choices. God uses Pharaoh's arrogant, stubborn personality to accomplish His will for Israel (cf. Rom. 9:18).

Also notice the purpose of God's actions with Pharaoh were redemptive in purpose; and inclusive in scope. They were intended:

1. to show God's power (versus the Egyptian nature and animal gods, as Genesis 1 does to the Babylonian astral deities)
2. to reveal Israel's God to Egypt and, by implication, the whole earth (cf. Rom. 9:17)

Western (American) thought magnifies the individual, but eastern thought focuses on the need of the corporate whole. God used Pharaoh to reveal Himself to a needy world. He will do the same with unbelieving Israel (cf. Romans 11). In this context the rights of the one diminishes in light of the needs of the whole. Remember, also the corporate OT examples of

1. Job's original children dying because of God's discussion with Satan (cf. Job 1-2).
2. the Israeli soldiers dying because of Achan's sin (cf. Joshua 7).
3. David's first child with Bathsheba dying because of David's sin (cf. 2 Sam. 12:15).

We are all affected by the choices of others. This corporality can be seen in the NT in Rom. 5:12-21.

SPECIAL TOPIC: BIBLICAL FAITH IS CORPORATE

SPECIAL TOPIC: EASTERN LITERATURE

9:17 "For the Scripture says. . ." The personification of Scripture is a way to show it is alive and relevant (cf. Rom. 10:6-8). Paul personifies "sin" and "death" in Romans 6-7) and now Scripture!

9:18 See SPECIAL TOPIC: GOD HARDENED

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 9:19-26

[19]You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" [20]On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? [21]Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? [22]What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? [23]And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, [24]*even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. [25]As He says also in Hosea,

"I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,'

AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"

"[26]AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,'

THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

9:19 "who resists His will" This is a PERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE, which emphasized a settled fact with continuing results (cf. 2 Chr. 20:6; Job 9:12; Ps. 135:6; Dan. 4:35). The diatribe

continues. Logically, following Paul's diatribe is the best way to outline and understand Paul's thought. See chapter introduction, B., 1. God's will needs to be seen on two levels.

1. The first level is His redemptive plans for all of the fallen human race (cf. Gen. 3:15). These plans are unaffected by individual human choice.
2. But on the second level, God chooses to use human instrumentality (cf. Exod. 3:7-9 and 10). People are chosen to accomplish His plans (both positively, Moses, and negatively, Pharaoh).

9:20-21 This imagery is taken from Isa. 29:16; 45:9-13; 64:8 and Jer. 18:1-12 9 (see notes online). The imagery of YHWH as a potter was often used for God as creator because mankind comes from clay (cf. Gen. 2:7). Paul drove home his point of the sovereignty of the creator by the use of three more questions—the first two in Rom. 9:20 and the third in Rom. 9:21. The last question returns to the analogy of God's positive choice in Moses and negative choice in Pharaoh. This same contrast is seen in

1. Isaac – Ishmael, Rom. 9:8-9
2. Jacob – Esau in Rom. 9:10-12
3. the nation of Israel and the nation of Edom in Rom. 9:13

This same analogy is developed to reflect Paul's contemporary situation of believing and unbelieving Jews. God's positive choice is ultimately expressed in the inclusion of believing Gentiles (Rom. 9:24-29,30-33)!

The grammatical form expects

1. a "no" answer to the question of Rom. 9:20
2. a "yes" answer to the question in Rom. 9:21

9:22 "if" This is a partial FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed true from the author's perspective, but with no grammatical conclusion. Verses 22-24 are one sentence in Greek. Verse 22 expresses the redemptive character of God. God is a God of justice. He will hold humanity accountable for their deeds. But He is also a God of mercy. All humans deserve to die (cf. Rom. 1:18-3:21). Justice is not good news! God's character is primarily mercy, not wrath (cf. Deut.5:9-10; 7:9; Hos. 11:8-9). His choices are for redemption (cf. Ezek. 36:22-33). He is patient with sinful mankind (cf. Ezek. 18). He even uses evil for His redemptive purposes (e.g., Satan, Pharaoh, Witch of Endor, Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and in Romans 11, unbelieving Israel)!

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE FALL OF MANKIND

▣

NASB	**"willing to demonstrate His wrath"**
NKJV	**"wanting to show His wrath"**
NRSV	**"desiring to show his wrath"**
TEV, Peshitta	**"wanted to show his anger"**
NJB	**"is ready to show his anger"**
REB	**"to display his retribution"**

God demonstrates His wrath to make known both His power (cf. Rom. 9:22) and the riches of His glory (cf. Rom. 9:23). God's actions always have redemptive purposes (except *Gehenna*, which is the final isolation of incalcitrant unbelief and sin).

SPECIAL TOPIC: *GEHENNA*

▣ **"vessels of wrath"** This term continues Paul's imagery of the clay from Rom. 9:20 and 21. They obviously refer to unbelieving human beings who God uses to further His plan of redemption.

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"prepared"**
NRSV	**"are made"**
TEV	**"doomed"**
NJB	**"designed"**
REB	**"tolerated"**
Peshitta	**"bring wrath"**

This is a PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. The word is used in the papyri (Moulton and Milligan) of something prepared for its full destiny. Rebellious unbelief will have its day of justice and consequences. However, God chooses to use unbelievers to accomplish His wider, inclusive, redemptive purposes.

M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*, vol. 2, says "Not fitted by God for destruction, but in an ADJECTIVAL sense, *ready*, *ripe* for destruction, the participle denoting a present state previously formed, but giving no hint of how it has been formed" (p. 716).

▣ **"destruction"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: DESTRUCTION

9:23 "to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy" This purpose clause shows God's eternal intent (i.e., mercy). The VERB is an AORIST ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE. God made His riches known in sending Jesus!

Paul often refers to the riches of

1. His kindness and forbearance and patience, Rom. 2:4
2. His glory to vessels of mercy, Rom. 9:23
3. His grace, Eph. 1:7
4. the glory of His inheritance, Eph. 1:18
5. His grace in kindness toward us in Christ, Eph. 2:7
6. Christ to the Gentiles, Eph. 3:8
7. His glory, Eph. 3:16
8. the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, Col. 1:27

▣ **"which He prepared beforehand for glory"** This same truth is stated in Rom. 8:29-30 and Eph. 1:4,11. This chapter is the strongest expression of God's sovereignty in the NT. There can be no dispute that God is in total charge of creation and redemption! This great truth should never be softened or finessed. However, it must be balanced with God's choice of covenant as a means of relating to human creation, made in His image. It is surely true that some OT covenants, like Gen. 9:8-17 and15:12-21, are unconditional and do not relate at all to human response, but other covenants are conditional on human response (i.e., Eden, Noah, Moses, David). God has a plan of redemption for His creation, no human can affect this plan. God has chosen to allow individuals to participate in His plans. This opportunity for participation is a theological tension between sovereignty (Romans 9) and human free will (Romans 10).

It is not appropriate to select one biblical emphasis and ignore another. There is tension between doctrines because eastern people present truth in dialectical or tension-filled pairs. Doctrines must be held in relationship to other doctrines. Truth is a mosaic of truths.

There is surely mystery here! Paul does not draw the logical conclusion to unbelievers prepared (*kataptizō*) for wrath (Rom. 9:22) and believers prepared (*proetoimazō*) for glory (Rom. 9:23). Is God's choice the only factor or is God's choice based on mercy for all, but some reject His offer? Does humanity have any part in their own future (cf. Rom. 9:30-10:21)? For me the concept of covenant unites both sovereignty and human freedom, with the emphasis on God's mercy and redemeptive purpose. Humanity can only respond to the initiatives of God (e.g., John 6:44,65). But for me, God's character is not capricious, but merciful. He reaches out to all conscious human creation made in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26,27). I struggle with this context. It is so powerful, yet it paints in black and white. Its focus is Jewish unbelief, which results in Gentile inclusion (Romans 11)! But this is not the only text on the character of God!

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S ETERNAL REDEMPTIVE PLAN

▣ **"glory"** See note at Rom. 3:23.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY (NT)

SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY (OT)

9:24 This verse shows that the object of God's promise is wider than just racial Israel. God has shown mercy on mankind based on His choice.

1. The promise of Gen. 3:15 is related to all mankind (because there is no Israel until Genesis 12).
2. The call of Abraham related to all mankind, Gen. 12:3.
3. The call of Israel as a kingdom of priests related to all mankind (cf. Exod. 19:5-6)!
4. This is the mystery of God, which was hidden, but is now fully revealed (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

Paul's assertion in Rom. 9:24 will be illustrated by a series of OT quotes (Rom. 9:25-29). Initially referring to Abraham's descendants, but now quoted to refer to Gentiles (see note at v. 33).

1. Rom. 9:25, Hosea 2:23
2. Rom. 9:26, Hosea 1:10b
3. Rom. 9:27, Isaiah 10:22 and/or Hosea 1:10a
4. Rom. 9:28, Isaiah 10:23
5. Rom. 9:29, Isaiah 1:9

9:25-26 In context this passage is from the Septuagint (LXX) of Hosea 2:23 (with some modifications) and Hosea 1:10, where it referred to the Northern Ten Tribes, but here Paul refers to Gentiles. This is typical of NT authors' use of the OT. They saw the church as the fulfillment of the promises to Israel (cf. Gal. 6:16; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 1:6). In its original Hebrew context the passage in Hosea refers to faithless Israel. If God could restore the idolatrous Northern Ten Tribes, Paul saw this as evidence of the love and forgiveness of God that would one day even include the idolatrous pagans (Gentiles).

SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S ETERNAL REDEMPTIVE PLAN

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 9:27-29

[27]Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; [28]FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." [29]And just as Isaiah foretold,

"UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,
WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

9:27-28 This is a loose quote from the Septuagint (LXX) of Isaiah 10:22-23. The Textus Receptus added a concluding phrase from the Septuagint of Isa. 10:23. But it is absent from the ancient Greek manuscripts P^{46}, א, A, and B, which shows it was a later addition by a copyist. The UBS^4 rates its omission as "certain."

9:27
NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NJB, REB, Peshitta "though"

TEV **"even if"**

This is a THIRD CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE (*ean* plus the SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD), which denotes potential action.

▣ **"LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA"** This is part of the metaphorical, hyperbolic language of God's promises to Abraham's descendants. Examples:

1. as dust of the earth – Gen. 13:16; 28:14; Num. 23:10
2. as the stars of the heavens – Gen. 15:5; 26:4; Deut. 1:10; 10:22
3. as the grains of sand on the seashores – Gen. 22:17; 32:12; Exod. 32:13

▣ **"THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED"** The term "remnant" is used often in the OT Prophets to refer to those Israelites who were taken into exile, but would be brought back to the promised land by God. In Paul's use of the term, it refers to those Jews who had a faith relationship with God and/or those who heard the gospel and responded by faith to Christ.

Even within Covenant Israel a spiritual separation occurred, only some were right with God. Israel's election did not exclude the need for an individual faith response (cf. Isa. 1:16-20).

Paul is using the OT phrase which initially referred to Jewish exiles, only a few of whom returned to Palestine, to refer to those who heard the gospel, but the large number of them also did not believe and receive Christ. Only a small percentage of first century hearers (Jews and Gentiles) responded to the gospel message. Paul calls those who did, the remnant.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE REMNANT, THREE SENSES

9:28

NASB	**"thoroughly and quickly"**
NKJV	**"finish. . .cut it short"**
NRSV	**"quickly and decisively"**
TEV	**"quickly settle his full account"**
NJB	**"without hesitation or delay"**
REB	**"will be summary and final"**
NIV	**"with speed and finality"**
NET	**"completely and quickly"**
Peshitta	**"bring to pass"**

The two Greek words involve a word play (*sun* compounds so common in Paul).

1. *suntelōn*, PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIIPLE of
   a. *sun*
   b. *teleō*
   which basically means "to consummate" or "be fully realized" (cf. Mark 13:4; Luke 4:2,13; Acts 21:27; Heb. 8:8)
2. *suntemnōn*, PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIIPLE of
   a. *sun*
   b. *temnō*
   which basically means "to cut short" or "to execute quickly" (found only here, but a related form is in Acts 24:4)

Where these sound plays are used, only the immediate context, not etymology or parallels, is helpful.

God has a purpose and plan for the salvation of His true people and His judgment of all others!

This verse is difficult to interpret so several later scribes tried to add phrases to clarify what they thought it meant. The UBS^4 gives the shortest text and "A" rating (certain).

9:29 This is a quote from the LXX of Isaiah 1:9, which denounces the sinfulness of national Israel.

▣ **"Lord of Sabaoth"** This was an OT title for YHWH, usually translated "Lord of Hosts" (cf. James 5:4). Depending on the context, this referred to God

1. in a military sense, "captain of the army of heaven" (cf. Josh. 5:13-15)
2. in an administrative sense, usually a Babylonian astral polytheism context relating to the heavenly bodies, "Lord of the heavenly bodies." Stars are creations, not gods; they do not control or shape events (cf. Gen. 1:16; Ps. 8:3; 147:4; Isa. 40:26).

SPECIAL TOPIC: LORD OF HOSTS

▣

NASB	**"unless. . .had left to us a posterity"**
NKJV	**"unless. . .had left us a seed"**
NRSV	**"had not left survivors"**
TEV, REB	**"had not left us some descendants"**
NJB	**"not left us a few survivors"**
Peshitta	**"had not increased the remnant"**

The Hebrew text of Isa. 1:9 has "remnant," but the Septuagint translated it "seed" (NKJV). God's judgment of Israel always spared

1. the believing remnant
2. the Messianic line

God spared the few to reach the many.

▣ **"Sodom. . .Gomorrah"** Verse 28 related to God's judgment. This verses specifically mentions two pagan cities which were destroyed by God in Gen. 19:24-26, but they became an idiom for God's judgment (cf. Deut. 29:34; Isa. 13:19; Jer. 20:16; 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11).

SPECIAL TOPIC: HOMOSEXUALITY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 9:30-33

[30]What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; [31]but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. [32]Why? Because *they did* not *pursue* it by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, [33]just as it is written,

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,

And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

9:30-31 This is the surprising conclusion of God's electing purpose. It is inclusive, not restrictive! Verses 30-33 are a summary of Romans 9 and an introduction to Romans 10. Believing Gentiles are made right with God, but not all Jews (cf. Rom. 9:6)!

God deals with all mankind in a covenantal way. God always takes the initiative and sets the conditions. However, individuals must respond by repentance and faith, obedience, and perseverance. Are humans saved

1. by God's sovereignty
2. by God's mercy through faith in the Messiah's finished work
3. by an act of personal faith?

Yes, yes, yes!

For me, all three are true. This is the mystery Romans 9-10 holds in tension.

For a word study on "pursue" see note at Rom. 14:19.

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

SPECIAL TOPIC: ELECTION

9:30 "Righteousness" The NOUN is used three times in Rom. 9:30 and once in Rom. 9:31. The "righteousness" of faith is contrasted with the "righteousness" of the law (cf. Rom. 3:21-31). Again the contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant. The problems with the old covenant open the door of the gospel for the whole world in Romans 11.

SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS

9:32 "by works" The Textus Receptus added "of the law." This was an addition by a later copyist. Paul did often use this phrase "works of the law" (cf. Rom. 3:20,28; Gal. 2:16; 3:2,5,10). However, the ancient Greek manuscripts P^{46}, ℵ*, A, B, F, and G omit the phrase in this verse. The UBS^4 rates the shorter text "B" (almost certain).

SPECIAL TOPIC: TEXTUAL CRITICISM

The key to God's righteousness is not human performance but the character and gift of God through Christ. Righteousness is an impossible attainment by fallen mankind, but it is a freely offered gift through faith in Christ (cf. Rom. 3:21-31). However, it must be received (cf. Rom. 9:33; John 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 4:1ff; 10:9-13; Eph. 2:8-9). This is the truth that sincere, religious, moral Jews (and all legalists) miss!

George Eldon Ladd in his book *A Theology of the New Testament*, makes a good point:

> "Paul's teaching about the Law is often approached from the perspective of the historical experience either of Paul himself as a Jewish rabbi, or of a typical first-century Jew under the Law. However, Paul's thought must be seen neither as a confession of his spiritual autobiography, nor as a description of the legalistic character of first-century Pharisaism, but as a theological interpretation by a Christian thinker of two ways of righteousness: legalism and faith" (p. 495).

9:33 This is taken from Isa. 28:16 combined with Isa. 8:14; see notes online.

"Behold I lay in Zion a stone," Isa. 28:16a
"of stumbling and a rock of offense," Isa. 8:14b
"and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed," Isa. 28:16b

By combining these verses in this way (rabbinical technique) he changes the meaning of Isa. 28:16 from positive to negative.

Paul manipulates the OT for gospel purposes.

1. He chooses which translation (LXX, MT, Targums, or his own)
2. He changes the contextual references (from Jews to Gentiles)
3. He combines OT texts from different contexts
4. He changes titles and PRONOUNS, which initially applied to YHWH, to Jesus of Nazareth

Paul, under inspiration, had the ability to alter OT texts! This is shocking to modern, conservative Christians. Our respect for God's Word causes us to treat Scripture in a special way! It is authortative and eternal (cf. Matt. 5:17-19), but Paul's use of these OT texts shows his flexibility similar to Jesus' flexibility, shown in Matt. 5:21-48. Jesus is "Lord of Scripture" and Paul is His called, gifted, and inspired spokesperson. We must allow Paul to use the Scripture in ways that you and I can not!! We are illumined by the Spirit, but he was inspired! Modern Christians cannot reproduce the hermeneutical procedures of NT authors.

SPECIAL TOPIC: INSPIRATION

SPECIAL TOPIC: ILLUMINATION

SPECIAL TOPIC: RABBINICAL HERMENEUTICAL TECHNIQUES

▣ **"he who believes in Him will not be disappointed"** This is from Isa. 28:16b. It is also quoted in Rom. 10:11 and is similar to Joel 2:32, quoted in Rom. 10:13. The key to salvation is both

1. the object (the cornerstone)

2. the individual's personal reception (faith in Him)

SPECIAL TOPIC: FAITH, BELIEVE, OR TRUST

SPECIAL TOPIC: SHAME

▣ **"A STONE"** This was originally a title for God (cf. Ps. 18:1-2,31,46; Deut. 32:18; 1 Sam. 2:2; Ps. 28:1; 31:3; 42:9; 71:3; 78:35), but it came to be a Messianic title (cf. Gen. 49:24; Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45; Matt. 21:42-44). The key element of God's covenant promise (the Messiah) was misunderstood and rejected by Israel (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23). The Jews misunderstood not only the Messiah's purpose, but the basic requirements of God's covenant. Christ became for the Jews a cause to stumble (cf. Isa. 8:14; Luke 2:34), but for the believers, both Jew and Gentile, He became the foundation stone (cf. Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6-10).

SPECIAL TOPIC: CORNERSTONE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How is Romans 9 (predestination) related to Romans 10 (mankind's free will)?
2. What is the main theme of Rom. 9:1-29?
3. Has God broken His promise to Israel?
4. List the privileges that national Israel enjoyed (9:4-5).
5. Were all the Jews right with God? Why or why not (9:6)?
6. If man is forced to do God's will is he morally responsible?
7. How is "mercy" the key to predestination (cf. Rom. 15, 16, 18, 23; 11:30-32)?

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